

September 2009 EnergyWiseSM Tip: “Weatherize your home and use less energy.”

Properly sealing and insulating your home is one of the most cost-effective ways to become more energy efficient.

According to ENERGY STAR®, a nationwide energy efficiency program sponsored jointly by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Energy, homeowners can realize a potential savings of up to 20 percent on heating and cooling costs (or up to 10 percent on their total annual energy bill) by improving the sealing and insulation of a home.

First, help make your house weather tight. Many air leaks and drafts in the home are easy to find because they are easy to feel – like those around windows and doors. Other leaks may take some hunting to find – like holes hidden in attics, basements and crawlspaces. Sealing any of these leaks with caulk, spray foam or weather stripping will have a great impact on improving your comfort and reducing utility bills.

Second, after any home sealing project, have a heating and cooling technician check to make sure your combustion appliances (gas- or oil-fired furnace, water heater and clothes dryer) are venting properly.

Third, here’s a good EnergyWiseSM rule of thumb: Don’t scrimp on the insulation! Insulation helps keep your home warm in winter and cool in summer. There are several common types of insulation – fiberglass (in both batt and blown forms), cellulose, rigid foam board and spray foam. When correctly installed with air sealing, each type of insulation can deliver comfort and lower energy bills throughout the majority of the year.

To get the biggest savings, the easiest place to add insulation is usually the attic. A quick way to see if you need more insulation is to look across your uncovered attic floor. If your insulation is level with or below the attic floor joists, you probably need to add more insulation.

For more information on steps homeowners can take to improve the energy efficiency of their homes, contact your local electric public power utility or visit the ENERGY STAR® Home Advisor at <http://www.energystar.gov/homeadvisor>. Lots of useful energy efficiency information is also available at <http://www.nppd.com>.

Your public power electric utility wants you to get the most energy value for your money. It costs far less to save energy than it does to build a new power plant to generate additional power.